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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#) [IR](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: IRANIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO CROATIA

REF: A. ZAGREB 00828
[1](#)B. D'AMICO-NEA 12/8 AND 12/10 EMAILS

Classified By: Peter D'Amico, Pol Off, Reasons 1.4 (B/D)

[1](#)1. (C) On December 18 Petar Mihatov, MFA State Secretary Bozinovic's Chief of Staff, provided Pol Off a read-out of Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM) for European Affairs Mahdi Safari's visit to Zagreb on December 15 and 16 (REF A).

Mihatov said that in the meetings at the MFA, Bozinovic stressed to Safari that while the GoI could have a peaceful nuclear program, it should be transparent and abide by the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Bozinovic added that Iran needed to respect the UN Security Council's resolutions on Iran's nuclear program. As a participating member of ISAF, Bozinovic said the GoC was also concerned about support for the Taliban and that neighboring countries like Iran had a responsibility to help Afghanistan's stability. Bozinovic underscored Croatia's support for the Annapolis process and stated that the GoC objected to any denials of either Israel's right to exist or of the holocaust. Mihatov said that at the last minute Safari wanted to organize a joint press conference following the meeting, but the MFA refused.

[1](#)2. (C) Mihatov noted that DFM Safari primarily raised economic issues in his discussions with officials in Zagreb. In meetings at the Ministry of Economy and the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, Safari complained about the low level of trade between the countries, the Croatian visa regime for Iranian citizens, the lack direct flights, and Iranian access to banking in Croatia. A statement from the President Mesic's office reported that Safari also raised economic issues in his discussion with President Mesic and that Safari noted that the Iranian-Croatian Council of Economic Cooperation had not held meetings. Mihatov, who was not in President Mesic's meeting with Safari, said that Mesic had reportedly raised the idea of talking with the U.S. Ambassador about Croatia's economic relationship with Iran after Safari departed.

COMMENT

[1](#)3. (C) The GoC was clearly aware that such a visit needed to be handled carefully. While not wanting to shut the door on the DFM of a country with whom Croatia has diplomatic relations, the GoC made sure the message that it sent to the Iranians was discussed in advance with key allies like the United States (REF B).

WALKER